PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN ESL AND EFL CONEXTS: SPEECH ACTS OF REFUSALS AND REQUESTS BY INDIAN AND YEMENI LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

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Introduction

Pragmatic competence has recently occupied a prominent place in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). Increasing attention has been paid to it due to the fact that many learners may have good knowledge of grammar and a wide range of vocabulary but they still fail in real interaction with native speakers (Almansoob, Patil &Alrefaee, 2019). For successful communication in a second language or a foreign language, it is essential for such second/foreign language learners to be aware not just of grammar and text organization but also the pragmatic aspects of the target language (Bachman 1990). Pragmatic competence is defined by Kasper (1997) as the knowledge of communicative action and how to carry it out, and the ability to use language appropriately according to context.

Many previous studies in interlanguage pragmatics, such as (Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993; Ellis 1994; Cohen 1996 and Kasper and Rose 1999) have demonstrated that similarities and differences exist in carrying out communicative actions between language learners and native speakers of target languages. Kasper (1996) describes three conditions to attain pragmatic knowledge: "There must be pertinent input, the input has to be noticed, and learners need ample opportunity to develop a high level of control" (p. 148). The ESL/TL environment is often more beneficial than the EFL environment in developing pragmatic competence. This is not necessarily due to greater access to authentic input in an ESL environment, but to the intensity of interaction with NSs that causes noticing (Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei, 1998; Kinginger, 2008; Schauer, 2006; Shimizu, 2009). The temporal factor of an extended stay in the TL community is an insufficient variable in developing pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Taguchi, 2008).

One of the controversial questions is whether 'pragmatics' can be taught in the language classroom, especially in an EFL context. As pragmatic competence has a close relationship with sociocultural values and beliefs of the country or the community where the target language is spoken, ESL learners certainly have an advantage in acquiring this knowledge. ESL learners have a better chance of having adequate and abundant input than EFL learners.

Status of English Language in Yemen

Building a language competent society has become an indisputable national priority among the major developing and developed nations of the world. Despite of this the English graduates in Yemen, where Arabic is the NL, face difficulties in using English language for communication. When engaged in an authentic communicative situation, they often lack some of the vocabulary or language items they need to get their meaning across. As a result, they cannot keep the interaction going for an extended period of time. The source of this failure comes as a result of the weakness of school graduates in English who come to join the universities as English language majors and English language learners in general. It is the aim in this study to address the different areas of difficulties and disadvantages that Yemeni learners face in their endeavour to learn English as a FL.

The weakness of English language learners and English language department majors / graduates more specifically, has been attributed to various factors. The most noticeable factors are; lack of knowledge on the part of school graduates when they join the university, school and English language department curricula, teaching methodology, lack of well-trained English language teachers, lack of the TL environment and the learners' motivations when they come to join the English department. Yemeni school graduates face different difficulties with English. They continue to make basic and frustrating errors in pronunciation, spellings, morphology and syntax. They fail to express themselves efficiently either in academic or in common everyday situations.

Examining the curricula of the English Department in the Yemeni Universities, one finds that they are heavily dominated by the literature component. In the departments of English, either in the faculty of education or arts, the components of the syllabus namely, language and linguistics show a lack of balance in the curriculum. Around one-third of the bachelor degree courses in the English departments are taught in Arabic. Social studies, Islamic studies, Education and Arabic are included in courses that would be better and helpful if they are taught in English rather than Arabic. The remaining of the courses may not be enough to help those graduates communicate freely and effectively in the TL. Unfortunately, English in Yemen is used only as an academic subject when it is taught in schools or universities. Students are not involved in real–life situations which enable them to use the language more successfully. Finally, the researcher's experience as a teacher of English as FL in schools in Yemen leads to the belief that English

language graduates, face difficulties in using English communicatively and pragmatically.

Status of English Language in India

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was introduced in India in the 1980s as the traditional approaches were failing to fulfill the current demands of English language learners. CLT is a language teaching programme focusing on learners' ability to communicate -to facilitate them to use the language for communication. Communicative Competence in simple words means that it is not enough to be able to produce grammatically correct sentences but it is important that the speaker is able to produce appropriate sentences, understanding the social context, the role of the participants, the information they share, and the function of the interaction.

India is a developing country and the teaching of English has become a real challenge right from the beginning of the history of English language teaching till date. Though language is the backbone of civilizations and cultures across the world but still everybody in this country is lamenting on the deteriorating condition of English in schools and colleges. English as a language is insufficiently developed in most of the students of schools especially government schools in some regions. The irony is even after spending 10-12 crucial years of their life learning English language from I to +2,most of the students remain tongue-tied and the same heritage of functionally illiterate learners in English is passed on to the colleges and the most affected ones are the students of BA stream. Moreover, the higher authorities always expect good results and teachers are caught in the mire as whether to complete syllabus or improve the English language of the learners.

It is astonishing to note that the English language has won 'global status' or 'International Language', and all the evidence suggests that the position of English has a global language is going to become stronger. Teaching pragmatics to the Indian students has remained a major challenge to the language teachers for ages. There are many issues and challenges that all language learner's and teachers are facing. Various obstacles regarding large number of students stuffed in small classroom, rural background, lack of confidence, lack of motivation, barrier of hesitation, lack of reading habits, phobia in the minds of learners, inappropriate curriculum that do not fulfill the requirements of English learners, lack of feedback and lack of trained and qualified teachers are some important factors that makes the entire process of implementing quality education futile in India

Vijayalakshmi, &, Babu, (2014).Finally, the importance of learning and teaching English in order to fulfill the ever-growing demands of English language, needs intensive researches in different fields to overcome the current challenges.

Statement of the Problem

To make the learners of SL or FL competent and successful learners, they do not need to focus only on linguistic knowledge such as syntax, morphology and phonology but also socio-cultural knowledge about the TL culture. Many scholars such as (Hymes, 1972; Wolfson, 1989; Canale & Swain, 1980) has been emphasized the importance of understanding the socio-cultural values of the TL, to successful L2 communication there is a need for the appropriate way of use linguistic sources in a social context. Therefore, there is a need to shift from the old approaches, transformational generative grammar (TGG), old perspective to more communicative perspectives and developed pragmatic knowledge

Making researches the pragmatic competence in ESL and EFL contexts by studying similarities and differences, comparing the strategies used for negotiating refusals and requests would assist in determining the gaps in English language teaching and learning. Although of the context of refusal of requests in ESL and EFL, the necessity for excellent cross-cultural interaction between societies practicing English describes the significance of marking the pragmatic understanding of language users. The failure in pragmatic competence might lead to misunderstanding between interlocutors in the target language, communicatively and socially.

Communicatively refusals of requests are taking a central place in daily conversations and negotiations. It seems hard to refuse requests and it is also more difficult to refuse them in a FL without hurting the interlocutor. This includes not just pragmatic knowledge, but also linguistic knowledge. One can produce a full variety of knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, but pragmatic competence can not be picked up suitably if misunderstandings can still proceed.

Yemeni EFL and Indian ESL speakers of English consider they need enough means when they feel lack to communicate appropriately and encounter some difficulties when they are placed in a situation. Despite their relevant unit of English grammar and vocabulary, Yemeni EFL and Indian ESL speakers may decline to communicate efficiently in exacting circumstances, and sometimes they might find communication

with NSs a negative practice. Therefore, instructions in the TL should concentrate on encouraging pragmatic comprehension and fitting learners to combine suitably into the TL-cultural patterns and represent different classifications of speech act skills.

Research Objectives

The present study intends to examine the Yemeni EFL and Indian ESL learner's pragmatic competence in refusals and requests through analyzing the pragmatic features, phonetic aspects, politeness norms, directness levels and the internal/external manipulative and supportive words they use. In this concern, this study aims at achieving the following objectives:

1. Investigating the pragmatic competence of the Yemeni EFL and Indian ESL learner's abilities to negotiate refusals and requests in English.
2. Examining the pragmatic characteristics, politeness norms and directness levels used by respondents when carrying out the speech acts of requests and refusals.
3. Recognizing the significance of two contextual variables, social status, and level of imposition, when considering variations in the use of appropriate requests and refusals between the groups.
4. Discover whether the environmental circumstances of learning English has a position to operate in the pragmatic competence of non-native learners.

Research Questions

To fulfil the above objectives, the current study has been designed to answer the following questions:

1. How do Indian ESL and Yemeni EFL learners produce the speech act of requests and refusals in contrast with American NSs of English?
2. Are the three groups have pragmatic differences when communicating with interlocutors from higher, equal and lower statuses using refusals?
3. Are the three groups hold pragmatic differences when performing requests and refusals with high and low impositions?
4. Are there any pragmatic differences between the two non-native groups based on the environment of learning English?

Research Significance

The significance of this study lies in many points; initially, the study findings will contribute to assist English teachers and learners in Yemen and India to recognize the extent of the role of pragmatics in SLA. The ESL and EFL teachers are expectedly supposed to make use of such findings to foretell circumstances in which English language students are expected to perform pragmatic mistakes. The right side of such foretells is the use of L2 pragmatic patterns to illuminate situations in which students fail pragmatically will be emphasized by English language teachers while the designers of the curriculum would tend to improve curriculum and get rid of these problematical areas. Second, comparing the pragmatic performance of two groups of English language learners (i.e. Yemeni EFL and Indian ESL learners) will contribute additional interpretation and real perspicacity into the literature of pragmatic competence. Third, this research particularly will improve knowledge of English language learning and teaching pragmatic features within Yemeni EFL and Indian ESL in pedagogical contexts. Finally, the findings of this study can contribute to cross-cultural interaction areas of dispute and collaboration between English teaching programs in India and Yemen.

Research Limitations

The present study targets two speech communities of English (EFL and ESL speakers) when comparing them to NSE. More specifically, this study focuses on two groups of English learners: Yemeni EFL learners in Yemen, and Indian ESL learners in India who are expected to be somehow familiar with the target language's cultural and social norms more than the first group. Accordingly, this study has the following limitations. First, in terms of topic, it is limited to examining pragmatic competence via producing the speech acts of refusal of request. Second, regarding the targeted language, English is under investigation as an SL and an FL. Third, considering the study subjects, the present study findings are applicable to Yemeni and Indian learners of English, in addition to American NSs. Finally, the temporal limitation of this study is that it will be conducted during the academic years 2021-2023.

Term Definition

Defining pragmatics

Different researchers have described pragmatics and defined it differently and this variety gives pragmatic remarkable position in all interdisciplinary fields. Garric and Calas (2007) expressed that the field of pragmatic has been born in ideas from and different backgrounds like philosophy, logic, and linguistic so this is the reason behind the difficulty to define pragmatics and this is the fact. Likewise, Thomas (1995) highlighted that the absence of a unanimous definition can be ascribed to the fact that pragmatics has been in continuous progress.

Leech, G. (2016) defined pragmatics as "The study of how utterances have meaning in situations". Another definition stated by, Rose and Kasper (2001, p. 2) pragmatics is “the study of communicative action in its sociocultural context”. This is to strengthen that context performs the main role in interpreting the letter of communication. Levinson (1983, p. 24) emphasized the significance of context as he defined pragmatics as “the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate”. At the equivalent indication, Yule (1996b, p. 3) described pragmatics as “the study of speaker meaning” which brought in thought “what people mean in a particular context and how the context influences what is said”. A definition stated by Yule (1996b, p.3): “Pragmatics is the study of how more gets communicated than is said”.

Pragmatic Competence:

A- Theoretical: For Bachman (1990), concerned those two major aspects of communicative language use shape pragmatic competence.

1. The relation between signs and referents.
2. The contexts of communication and the language users.

B- Operational: According to Bachman's (1990) definition regarding pragmatic competence, this concept about pragmatic competence considered within the aforementioned study is regarding with the knowledge of the pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions in a given context.

Research Methodology

Subjects

The subjects for this study will include 200 participants divided to three groups as following:

-Eighty Yemeni EFL learners who are graduates from the departments of English language, Faculties of Arts, Languages and Education at Sana'a, Taiz and Dhmar Universities.

-Eighty Indian ESL learners who are graduates from the departments of English language, Faculties of Arts, Languages and Education in Indian Universities.

-Forty Americans native speakers of English who are enrolled in academic institutions.

These participants will be asked to fill in a written and verbal statements pertaining to request and refusals using two quantitative data collection methods: namely, Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) and role-playing Tasks (RPTs) questionnaires consist of nine situations. In each case, the questionnaire will be designed so that one refusal will be made to someone of higher status, lower status, or a status equal. The responses of the two groups of Yemeni EFL and Indian ESL will be compared to American NSs of English to find out to what extent the Yemeni EFL learners and Indian ESL manipulate their pragmatic competence of the target language to refuse requests in English.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

All the subjects will be asked to fill out a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) and role-playing Tasks (RPTs) questionnaires. The DCT is a form of questionnaire that will be used in this investigation involves nine written situations to which the respondents are expected to respond making refusals to requests. This test was originally designed by Blum-Kulka in 1982 and has been widely used since then in collecting data on speech acts realization both within and across language groups. Regarding the (RPTs) questionnaire will be used in this investigation involve nine verbal situations see (Appendixes A & B).

Instruments

Discourse-Completion Tasks (DCTs)

DCT is "written questionnaires including a number of brief situational descriptions, followed by a short dialogue with an empty slot for the speech act under study" (Kasper &Dahl, 1991, p. 221). In the field of pragmatics, DCT is one of the most popular data collecting tools used to assess participants' pragmatic competence. The DCTs will be used in this study will be arranged into two parts: (1) nine unfinished request scenarios, and (2) nine unfinished refusal scenarios. For each scenario, the participants were provided with a specific social situation and a conversational gap, for them to add what they would say in the given situation. The scenarios were intended to be as realistic as possible, and applicable to both Yemeni and Indian cultural contexts with contrast to American NSs (see appendix A). All nine request scenarios in the DCT varied in terms of both degree of imposition (low/high) and the interlocutor's status (lower/equal/higher).

High imposition and low imposition

	Low imposition	**High imposition**
Higher status	Requesting a professor open the window	Requesting that a very busy professor reschedule a crucial meeting with you
Equal status	Asking for directions	Requesting that another student fill out your long questionnaire
lower status	Requesting students step aside from the door	Requesting help from a busy student

Table above shows the classification of the 9 request scenarios in accordance with the two variables

The nine refusal scenarios presented in the DCT also varied in terms of the degree of imposition (refusing offers and invitations and refusing requests), and in the interlocutor's status (lower/equal/higher), as these two variables had been identified in previous studies as having an impact on how participants express refusals.

	Refusing requests (high)	**Refusing offers and invitations (low)**
Higher status	Refusing a lecturer's request to help with the fresher's week orientation Refusing to help with choosing books	Refusing your boss' invitation to have dinner together Refusing your boss' offer of drink
Equal status	Refusing a colleague's request to use your laptop	Refusing a friend's invitation to the beach Refusing a friend's offer of a drink
Lower status	Refusing a worker's request to use your car	Refusing your student's offer of a drink

Table above shows the classification of the 9 refusal scenarios in accordance with the two variables

The following extract gives two examples of a request and refusal in a DCT scenario:

Scenario (1): You have a crucial meeting with your professor this Wednesday, but you cannot attend forsome reasons. This is the second time this has happened this month. You need to ask your professor toreschedule your meeting. You say: "……"

Scenario (2): Your colleague's laptop has been infected by a virus while downloading files from thecompany's website. He has tried some new anti-virus software, but it is not sufficiently effective. Then, heasks for your laptop to finish the work. However, you decline his request.

Colleague: "Oh!! I have to finish these files today. Can I use your laptop please?"

You**:** "……"

Open Role-play Tasks (RPTs)

For the RPTs, pairs of participants will be given cards with descriptions detailing unfinished scenarios. In each of the scenarios, one student had to request something and the other student has to refuse it, following the guidelines on the card (see appendix B). The conversations will be audio recorded and students will be given a few minutes to prepare before the recording. Similarly, to the DTCs, the request and refusal scenarios in RPTs will cover different levels of imposition and specified social status. Examples from the RPT scenarios are presented below:

Card 1 (requesting from a worker): You work in a coffee shop as a manager. You are outside your shop calling your mother, and your mobile phone battery dies before she has finished speaking. You enter the shop and ask one of your workers if you can use his or her mobile phone so you can call your mother back
(who lives in the same city) for only one minute.
Your Role: You ask a worker if you can use his or her mobile phone.

Card 2 (refusing a request from a manager): You work in a coffee shop. You are waiting for a very important call this morning. You put your mobile phone in front of you and keep checking it regularly. Your manager is outside calling someone on the phone, they then enter and asks for your mobile to make a short call. You have to refuse your manager's request.
Your Role: You listen to your manager's request and you will have to refuse it.

Administration of the Questionnaires

The participants will be informed to read the introductory information provided before the situations carefully in order to recognize the type of each situation. They will also be informed that every question could only be answered by a specific answer. The respondents of the three groups will be given half an hour to fill the DCT and RPT in English language. For the Yemeni EFL and Indian ESL learners of English, the questionnaires will be administrated by this study's researcher in Yemen and India. For the American NSs of English, it will be administrated in America by the researcher's wife who is an American citizen owning a training centre in Washington.

Data Analysis

A content analysis will be carried out on all the data collected from the subjects. The pragmatic features and strategies for the requests and refusals as made by the Yemeni EFL and Indian ESL learners, in comparison to the ones made by English native speakers will be classified and analysed according to the degree of impositions and the social status of interlocutors. For the analysis of pragmatic strategies made in the speech act of request, the classification of request strategies set out by Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) will be used as an analysis criteria. The pragmatic strategies used for refusals, on the other hand, will be categorized according to the Universal Refusal Strategies Taxonomy of Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990, pp. 72-73), Appendixes (C).

Validity of the Instruments

DCTs, and open and closed RPTs are commonly employed in pragmatic production studies (Gabriele Kasper & Merete Dahl, 1991,p. 217). DCTs have been extensively used to elicit speech act realizations, since Blum-Kulka(1982) first used them in the field of ILP. This method can be considered an appropriate elicitation method, which can yield relevant pragmalinguistic data in the form of speech acts, especially in specific contexts, such as EFL contexts where naturally occurring data cannot be gathered, is inaccessible, or has proven very hard to collect (Nelson et al., 2002). As the social situations and contextual variables in DCTs can be easily controlled and manipulated, in a study such as this one, they are preferable to naturally-occurring data (Schauer & Adolphs,2006, p. 131). Furthermore, DCTs are broadly seen to provide model or stereotypical responses for spontaneous speech, and thus reflect informants' pragmatic norms (Beebe &Cummings, 1996). Data obtained through DCTs has also been seen to both represent

pragmatic norms (Hinkel, 1997) and to reflect learners' pragmatic competence (Al-Eryani,2007), which is precisely what the current study will focus on.

Open RPTs will be also adopted for this research as a complementary data-gathering tools, to compensate for deficiencies in the DCTs and thereby enhance the validity of the study, since open RPTs require interaction between interlocutors. Nonetheless, DCTs and RPTs share many common features, such allowing the researcher to tightly control contextual variables, such as the age or status of the interlocutors, and the fact that the tools used are easily replicable in different contexts at different times, differing from ethnographic studies. Furthermore, DCTs and RPTs can also reveal participants' accumulated experience concerning a given situation. For the above-mentioned reasons, DCTs and RPTs have been widely used in studies of ILP, and have been found to be useful and appropriate. In addition, the integration of both the DCT and RPT in a single study strengthens the research design, adding to the overall methodological robustness of the current study. Finally, DCTs and RPTs remain a viable choice for researchers, in the absence of a better alternative.

Literature Review

The concept of Pragmatics

As argued by Crystal (2010, p. 124), pragmatics is not a coherent field of study since it overlaps with many other linguistic areas and consists of various different aspects of language use. Thus, linguists tend to define the field according to their own interests and research aims. Kasper & Rose (2001) state that pragmatics has been defined in a variety of ways in relation to authors' theoretical orientation and audience. Defining what exactly pragmatics means has been one of the main concerns of many studies so far. As argued by Ariel (2010), the original definition of this notion dates back to Morris (1938) where he tries to distinguish pragmatics from grammar and semantics, and explains that a phenomenon is pragmatics if, in accounting for it, reference must be made to the language user (producer or interpreter). Since then, there have been many attempts to define this concept and going through the literature, we find various definitions based on different criteria.

Levinson (1983) was one of the first researchers who tried to resolve the issue of vagueness surrounding the concept of pragmatics. In an attempt to provide a precise

definition of pragmatics, Levinson (1983) spent most of his first chapter defining this notion. According to Levinson (1983) defining a boundary between pragmatics and grammar could be the starting point to define the notion of pragmatics. He refers to two principles of pragmatics which have been proposed. The first principle is that pragmatics should be only concerned with principles of language use and has nothing to do with linguistic structure. The second principle was proposed by Chomsky (1965) in his distinction between competence and performance where he states that pragmatics is solely concerned with performance principles of language use.

Pragmatics has also been defined in terms of how it is related to the meaning. Leech (1983) defined pragmatics as the study of how utterances have meanings in situations. Gazdar (1979a, p. 2) stresses that "pragmatics has its topic of those aspects of the meaning of utterances which cannot be accounted for by straightforward reference to the truth conditions of a sentence uttered. Therefore, Pragmatics = Meaning – Truth Condition". This definition not only does not contribute to a clear understanding of pragmatics, but also allows semantics in which causes even more puzzlement.

The role of context has also been the centre of many definitions of pragmatics. Levinson (1983, p. 21) provides a context-dependent definition as "pragmatics is the study of the relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding". Also, Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) stress the role of context when they find pragmatics as the study of people's comprehension and production of linguistic action in context. Moreover, Mey (2001, p. 6) believes that "pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society".

In another attempt to define this notion, Crystal (1985, p. 240) stresses the importance of the speaker and defines pragmatics as "the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication".

Pragmatic Competence

Along the continuum of ILP processes, L2 learners are already equipped with general pragmatic knowledge (the cumulative use of language in general as defined by Blum-Kulka, 1991), L1 pragmalinguistic knowledge (knowledge of particular linguistic forms conveying particular illocutions as defined by Leech, 1983) and L1 sociopragmatic

knowledge (knowledge of social and discourse principles which vary in different social contexts, cultures and language communities as also defined by Leech,1983). The ability to use such utterances in an effective and efficient manner is described as communicative or pragmatic competence (Francis, 1997).

Bachman (1990) was the first researcher to explicitly divide language knowledge into organizational and pragmatic competence. Organizational competence implies the control of the formal structure of language in order to produce or recognize grammatically correct sentences, to understand their prepositional content and to order them to form texts. Pragmatic competence on the other hand, is concerned with two significant aspects of communicative language use, the relationship between these signs and referents, and the language users and the contexts of communication. The notion of pragmatic competence, according to Bachman (1990) is subdivided into two sub-components, namely those of illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence, figure 1 below. Illocutionary competence refers to the knowledge of the pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions, whereas sociolinguistic competence is concerned with the knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions for performing language functions appropriately in a given context.

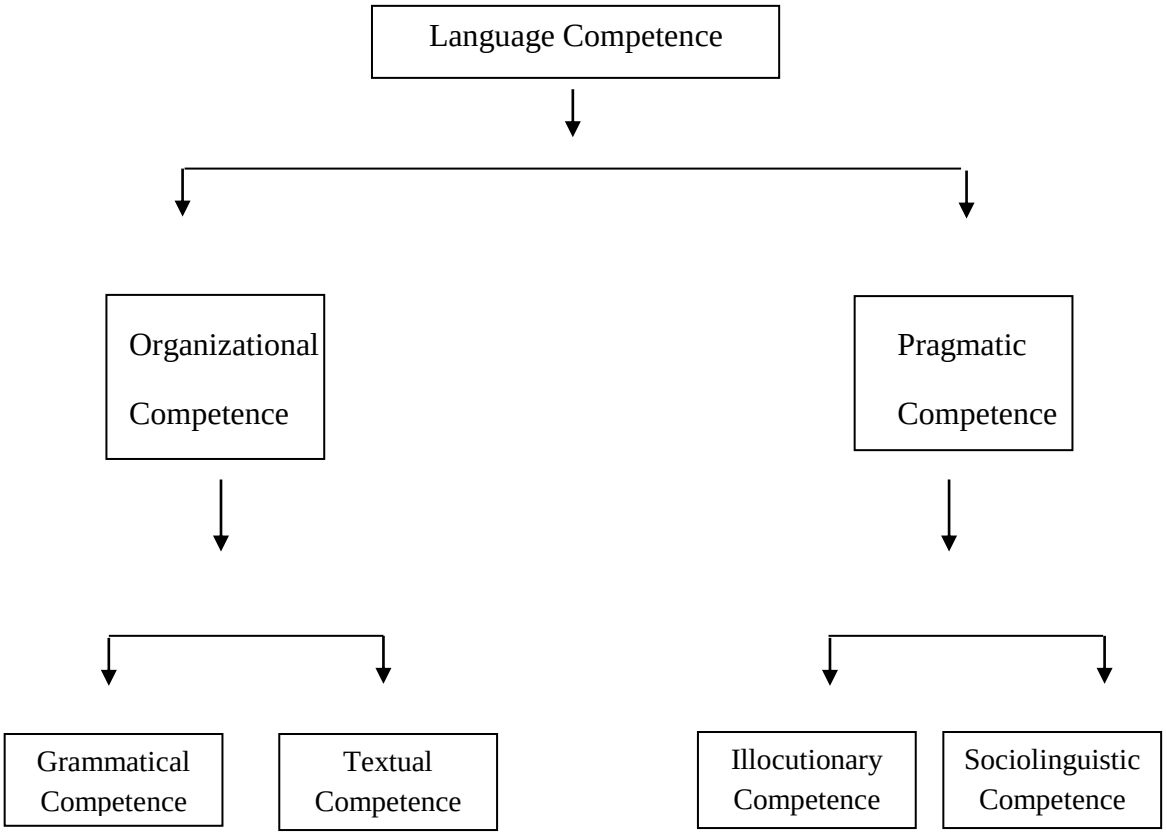

Figure 1: Bachman's (1990:87) model of communicative competence

On the basis of Bachman's (1990) model of language competence, integrating the pragmatic component, Barron (2003, p.10) offers a working definition of pragmatic competence as " knowledge of the linguistic resources available in given language for realizing particular illocutions knowledge of the sequential aspects of speech acts, and finally knowledge of the appropriate contextual use of the particular language's linguistic resources."

Speech Act of Refusal

As one of the basic tenets of pragmatics, speech act theory has been examined in many fields, including philosophy (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969, 1979) anthropology, sociolinguistics, and linguistics (Sadock, 1974; Bach & Harnish, 1979). Speech act theory was developed by philosopher Austin (1962) in an attempt to explain how particular utterances operate within natural language; nevertheless, it was further studied by Searle (1969). Austin (1962) was interested in how words seemed not only to provide information and facts, but also how these words seemed to carry action. According to Austin (1962), speech acts are speakers' utterances which convey meaning and make listeners do specific things. The primary function of speech acts is that various functions can be implemented by means of language. Austin (1962) indicates that people perform three different kinds of acts when speaking:

(a) Locutionary acts, which are the literal meanings of the utterances that we use. Therefore, it is the basic act of utterance or producing a meaningful linguistic expression.

(b) Illocutionary acts, which is the intention that we have as speakers or the effect that our utterances have on hearers. The illocutionary act is performed via the communicative force ofan utterance, like the act of making a bet, or a promise, or an offer, etc. by applying the force carried within the performatives, either directly or indirectly.

(c) Perlocutionary acts, which are the results that are created through our illocution acts.

Previous Studies

Al MarraniandSuraih(2019) investigated the types of invitation strategies as produced by Yemeni EFL learners. The study involved 171 undergraduate students from Sana'a University. The DCT was used to collect the data. The results of the study showed that the Yemeni EFL learners preferred to be direct in the use of the speech act of invitation making, with highest frequency of imperative strategy followed by Yes/No questions strategy. In addition, the learners were aware that there is no problem with using direct invitations because they are acceptable in their culture. The study also foundthat the utterances translated fromthe mother tongue into the target language by Yemeni EFL learners without considering the distinctions between the two languages in sentence models and word order.

Altheeby (2018) conducted a study by evaluating thepragmatic competence of Saudi EFL learners in Saudi Arabia and Saudi ESL learners in theUK. More specifically, his study investigated how EFL and ESL groups perform the speech acts of*requests* and *refusals* in English, in contrast with British native speakers of English (NSE) asa point of comparison. The participants in this study were 90 Saudi EFL learners, 90 Saudi ESLlearners, and 60 British NSE. The data set, including the utterances of requests and refusals inEnglish, was compiled using two quantitative research methods: (1) a discourse-completiontask (DCT) comprising nine request scenarios and nine refusal scenarios, and (2) a role-playtask (RPT), involving six request scenarios and nine refusal scenarios. The pragmatic featuresof the requests were categorised, quantified and analysed using the classifications set out byBlum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989), whilst the pragmatic features of refusals werecategorised according to the Universal Refusal Strategies Taxonomy of Beebe, Takahashi,and Uliss-Weltz (1990, pp. 72-73). The results indicated notable pragmatic similarities anddifferences in the requests and refusals across the three groups.

Sahar Ramy (2018) investigated the pragmatic competence of Egyptian EFL learners when performing the speech act of complaining. The research directed at investigating the impact of social variables on the product of complaints by both the EFL learners and the NSs. The participants were, 61 Egyptian EFL learners and 11 ENSs they completed a complaint DCT offered by Murphy and Neu (1996), consisted of 7 positions indicating

the speech act of complaint. The results showed that the condition of the elements provided by the Egyptian learners varies significantly from those offered by the native speakers. It was revealed that the Egyptian learners do not confirm satisfactory pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic abilitythat qualifies them to give adequate complaints in English. The NSs complained more sensitive more indirectly than the Egyptian EFL and they adjusted their politeness strategies according to the social variables.

D Al-Aghbari(2016) conducted a study on the teaching of pragmatics in a context of Specialized English (ASP), at the University of Taiz. The study investigated the level of pragmatic competence in medical students with the aim of integrating it into the classroom. The study used questionnaire survey composed of DCT, a consciousness test and the interview. The participants distributed into two groups 56 second-year students for questionnaire of DCT and 7 graduate students for the interview. A qualitative and quantitative approach is adopted for data analysis. The results showed that students have a pragmatic incompetencyin pragmatic production and conscience. The study recommendedthe using a television series that could motivate students to learn English.

Taghizadeh(2017) conducted a study in the target language of Iranian learners of English with the aim of examining their pragmatic competence. Mixed-methods usedin collected data.50 Iranian NNSs and 37 American NNs participated in this study. In addition, this studydeveloped a new questionnaire to measure the knowledge of conversational implicatures andpresuppositions of Farsi learners of English. The results indicated that the Iranian learners ofEnglish lack the knowledge of conversational implicatures and presuppositions in English.

Ming-Fang (2014) conducted a study of examining Pragmatic on Chinese EFL Learners about Refusals' Perception and Performance……etc.

A similar study carried out by Al-Gahtani and Roever (2009) examined the requestsmade by Saudi Arabic-speaking students, focusing on instances where the hearer treated thespeakers’ utterance as a request. The study addressed particular attention towards therelationship between second language proficiency and pragmatic transfer…….etc.

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Appendix (A)

Discourse Completion Task (DCT)

REQUEST SCENARIOS

1- You are a new student at the university and are looking for your classroom (B123). Whilesearching, you find a student in the corridor and you want to ask him where your classroomis. You say:

……..…….……..……
……..……..……..……
……...……..……
……..…….……..

2- You are now in your classroom (B123). It is very hot and stuffy. You look around and seethat your lecturer is near to the window, and you want him/her to open the window. You say:

……..…….……..……
……..……..……..……
……...……..……
……..…….……..

3- You have very long questionnaires that need to be filled in by students from another department. You go there and see a student in the hallway. You say:

……..…….……..……
……..……..……..……
……...……..……
……..…….……..

4- You have a crucial meeting with your professor this Wednesday, but you cannot attend for some reason. This is the second time that this has happened this month. You need to ask your professor to reschedule your meeting. You say:

5-

6-

7-

8-

9-

SECTION (2)

REFUSAL SCENARIOS

10- It is Friday afternoon. You meet a friend in front of your department. He says that he isgoing to the beach next Sunday and invites you to join, but you cannot go.
Your friend: “Hey, I am going to the beach next Sunday, do you want to come along?”
You:……..…….……..……
…….……..……..……
……...……..……
…….…….……..

11- You are about to leave your office and your boss stops you and invites you to have dinnerwith him. You cannot go, and you have to refuse his invitation.
Your boss: “Oh by the way, I am going to have a dinner in a nearby restaurant. I would bevery pleased if you could come”
You:……..…….……..……
…….……..……..……
……...……..……
……..…….……..

12- You are a senior undergraduate student. During your break time, you happen to haveabrief chat with a lecturer who is organising some events for fresher’s week orientation. Thelecturer – who is going to teach you next semester – asks if you can help with this, but you donot want to.
Lecturer: “We are going to have some activities for fresher’s week orientation. As you are asenior student, we would be very pleased if you could help us.”
You:……..…….……..……
…….……..……..……
……...……..……
…….……..

13-

14-

15-

16-

17-

18-

Appendix (B)

Open Role Play Task

Role Play I

Card 1 (Requesting something of a supervisor):

You are an undergraduate student, and you are in a project group that consists of fivestudents. You did not get along with your group as you realised that you were the only personin the group who was actually working on the project. You told the project supervisor aboutthis and all he did was email the other group members to ask them to cooperate with you.However, you continued doing all the work. Your project, which is due soon, is now far fromcompletion. You want to see your supervisor and ask to be allowed to join another group.

Your Role: asking your professor to allow you to join another group.

Card 2 (Refusing a request made by a student):

You are a lecturer and a supervisor of five project groups. Each group consists of five students who have been told from the first day that they should choose their topics and groupscarefully as no changes can be made later. The groups have been working on their projects forsix weeks and completed projects must be submitted to you in five days' time. You know thatthere has been a lack of cooperation among the members of one group (Group A), and a hardworkingstudent from group A is in your office now.

Your Role: You will listen to your student's request and you will have to refuse it.

Role Play II

Role Play III

Role Play IV

Role Play V

Role Play VI

Role Play VII (Offers-Invitations)

Appendix (C)

Classification of Refusal Strategies by Beebe et al. (1990)

Refusals can be classified into two categories:

I. Direct

1. Using performative verbs (I refuse)

2. Non performative statement

* "No"

*Negative willingness/ability (I can't./I won't./I don't think so) I

II. Indirect

1. Statement of regret (I'm sorry.../I feel terrible...)

2. Wish (I wish I could help you...)

3. Excuse, reason, explanation (My children will be home that night./I have a headache)

4. Statement of alternative

* I can do X instead of Y (I'd rather.../I'd prefer...)

* Why don't you do X instead of Y (Why don't you ask someone else?)

5. Set condition for future or past acceptance (If you had asked me earlier, I would have...)

6. Promise of future acceptance (I'll do it next time./I promise I'll.../Next time I'll...)

7. Statement of principle (I never do business with friends.)

8. Statement of philosophy (One can't be too careful.)

9. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor

* Threat or statement of negative consequences to the requester (I won't be any fun tonight to refuse an invitation)

* Guilt trip (waitress to customers who want to sit a while: I can't make a living off people who just order coffee.)

* Criticize the request/requester (statement of negative feeling or opinion; insult/attack (Who do you think you are?/That's a terrible idea!)

* Request for help, empathy, and assistance by dropping or holding the request

* Let interlocutor off the hook (Don't worry about it./That's okay./You don't have to.) * Self-defence (I'm trying my best./I'm doing all I can do.)

10. Acceptance that functions as a refusal

* Unspecific or indefinite reply

* Lack of enthusiasm

11. Avoidance

* Nonverbal ♣ Silence ♣ Hesitation ♣ Doing nothing ♣ Physical departure

* Verbal ♣ Topic switch ♣ Joke ♣ Repetition of part of request (Monday?) ♣ Postponement (I'll think about it.) ♣ Hedge (Gee, I don't know./I'm not sure

Adjuncts to Refusals

1. Positive opinion: That's a good idea, but . . .

2. Willingness: I'd love to go, but . . . 3 – 4- 5- 6

DIRECTNESS STRATEGY

Explanation & Examples

	DIRECTNESS	**DIRECTNESS**
I. Direct requests	1. Mood derivable	The imperative is used to determine illocutionary intent: *Clean up this mess, please.*
	2. Unhedged performative	Naming illocutionary intent by using a relevant illocutionary verb: *I'm asking you to clean up this mess.*
	3. Hedged performative	The illocutionary intent is modified by using certain modals/verbs: *I must/have to ask you to clean the kitchen right now*.
	4 Locution derivable	The illocutionary intent is directly derivable from stating the hearer's obligation: *You'll have to clean the kitchen*.
	5. Scope stating	Expressing your intentions, desires, or feelings*: I really wish you'd clean the kitchen.*
II. Conventionally indirect requests	6. Suggestory formula	The illocutionary intent is impeded in a suggestion to do x: *How about cleaning the kitchen?*
	7. Query preparatory	The illocutionary intent is conventionalized in the models of ability and willingness: *Could you clean up the kitchen?*
III. Non-conventionally indirect requests	8. Strong hints	The illocutionary intent is derivable from hints with partial reference to a request: *You've left the kitchen in a right mess.*
	9. Mild hints	The illocutionary intent is derivable from hints with no reference to a request: *I couldn't cook*.

Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) Directness Category

Table shows the frequency of Refusal Strategies will be Made by the groups

Level of Directness	**Type of Strategy**	**Yemeni EFL learners of English**					**Indian ESL learners of English**				
		Higher status	**Equal status**	**Lower status**	**Total per Str.**	**Total per Group**	**Higher status**	**Equal status**	**Lower status**	**Total per Str.**	**Total per Group**
Direct	**Direct Refusal**										
Indirect	**Regret**										
	Wish										
	Excuse, Reason										
Adjuncts	**Positive opinion**										
	Willingness										
	Gratitude										
	St. Empathy										
Total											
%											

The table above shows the cycle of refusal strategies will be used by the groups (for every group one table)

(1) Internal modifications will be used in the head act of requesting.

1. Internal Downgraders:

1.1 Lexical downgraders: used in the head act to reduce and soften the force of the request:

 Downtoner: e.g. Could I *maybe* have.....?

 Politeness marker: e.g. ...., *please*?

 Understater: e.g. Can you speak up *a bit*, please?

 Hedge used to make the request vaguer, such as: How about meeting at the weekend *somehow*?

 Appealer: *We are going in the same direction, aren't we?*

1.2 Syntactic downgraders: syntactic items used to reduce the force of the request:

 Conditional Clause: If you could just .....

 Subjunctive: Might be better if you were to leave now.

 Appreciative Embedding: It would be nice if…

 Tag question: I don't suppose you could help, could you?

 Tense (e.g. want/wanted was wondering): The past tense is seen as downgrading (making the request

more polite) when used with present time reference: e.g. *I wanted you to pass me*....?

 Negation: You couldn't do me a favour, please?

2. Internal Upgraders:

 Intensifier: e.g. I have got such *a huge headache,* could...

 Time Intensifier: e.g. I have urgent meetings at the same time…

 Expletive: e.g. I can't understand this *bloody* classification, could you...

 Exaggerated utterances: e.g. I am really desperate to get this...

 Lexical uptoner: A marked lexical choice gives negative connotations: clean up that *mess*!

 Determination marker: A marked lexical choice indicates a heightened degree of determination: I've explained myself and *that's that!*

 Orthographic/suprasegmented emphasis: Underlining/using exclamation marks in writing or using marked pauses, stress and intonation in speaking: Cleaning the kitchen is your business!!!

(2) External modifications in supportive words/sentences.

 Linguistic devices (alerter) For attracting requestees' attention: e.g. Excuse me, er, hello, Ali.

 Pre-request (preparatory) Utterances used to prepare interlocutors for requests: e.g. May I ask you something?

 Head (getting a pre-commitment): e.g. Can you do me a favour?

 Grounder: Providing reasons, explanations or justifications for the request e.*g. because it's hard to do this.*

 Disarmer: Trying to predict and negotiate any excuses or objections hearers may use, *e.g. I know how busy you are but...*

 Imposition minimizer: e.g. Would you give me a lift, but only if you are going my way.

 Sweeteners: e.g. You are the right person to help with....

 Promise of reward: e.g. I'll help you if you ever need me.

 Aggravating supportive moves: Insulting, threatening, or moralizing e.g. *I don't have to ask for this, it's your responsibility.*

The internal and external modifiers used in the project by Shoshana Blum-Kulka et al. (1989)